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ABSTRACT

Using ethnographic methodology, a study investigated the writing processes, in English, of 10 Spanish-speaking bilingual/bicultural graduate students and the possible influence of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds upon these processes. All subjects had been born and initially schooled through the twelfth grade in Latin America, and had been residents in the United States for an average of 19 years. Data were collected through interviews and observations of the writers in naturalistic environments. In addition, each writer was directed to compose (aloud in two instances) three different essays about (1) a personal experience, (2) a topic selected by the researchers, and (3) an article read previously. Findings revealed that the writing in English by these students was in large part controlled by their acquired and native language, thought, and culture. Further, their writing processes appeared halting, recursive, and doubt-riddled. The findings also showed that they basically wrote in three modes: expressive (focus on culture), instrumental (focus on language), and technical (focus on thought). (HOD)

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Abstract

The Writing Processes of Spanish-Speaking
Bilingual/Bicultural Graduate Students:
An Ethnographic Perspective

The central purpose of this study was to investigate the writing processes, in English, of Spanish-speaking bilingual/bicultural graduate students by looking at the possible influence of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds upon these processes. Fundamental to this study was an understanding of the relationships among language, thought, and culture. Using ethnographic methodology (primarily an emic approach), the researcher interviewed and observed ten (six females and four males) Spanish-speaking bilingual/bicultural graduate students born and initially schooled (K-12) in Latin America, and who have been residents in the United States for an average of 19 years.

Findings suggested that writing in English by these students was in large part controlled by their acquired language, thought, and culture (L2 T2 C2) and native language, thought, and culture (L1 T1 C1). Further, their writing processes appeared halting, recursive, and doubt-riddled. The findings also suggested that they basically wrote in three modes: expressive (focus on culture), instrumental (focus on language), and technical (focus on thought).

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(focus on language), and technical (focus on thought).

Introduction

Writing essays, reports, research papers, theses, etc. has become so important to academic success (and professional life) in American universities that students who fail to produce clear English prose frequently endure tremendous hardships and embarrassment. Indeed, some researchers feel the problem has reached "crisis proportions" and it appears that despite universal schooling, a great percentage of American students have difficulties with their writing skills.

If writing skills have become a problem for the native population, what, then, can one assume about the writing skills of students whose native language is other than English? The (foreign born) bilingual/bicultural student who is able to perform equally well in both languages and both cultures is rare. The problem is evident when bilingual/bicultural students are asked to write a formal essay in their second language (L2). The odds are that most essays produced under these conditions will reflect the habitual thought patterns and sequence of organization of the author's native language (L1) and culture.

While the need for an understanding of the composing processes of the non-native speaker may seem obvious, most of the early research on composing processes did not direct much attention to these students. The few studies on the composing processes of non-native speakers were mainly conducted

with ESL students (Zamel 1982b, 1983, Jones 1982). The interest in the composing processes of adult bilingual/ bicultural students constitutes a relatively new, marginal, and little explored area.

It was the purpose of this investigation to study the composing or writing processes, in English, of Spanish-speaking bilingual/bicultural graduate students and the possible influence of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds upon these processes. More specifically, answers to the following questions were sought: How do Spanish-speaking bilingual/ bicultural graduate students' linguistic and cultural background appear to influence their writing processes in English? What are the characteristics of the writing processes of bilingual/ bicultural graduate students? What are the different modes in which these students write?

Background of the Study

The material in this section has two goals: 1) to provide the conceptual framework upon which this study is based; and 2) to survey the research literature that preceded this study. The conceptual framework and the research literature provide the paradigm within which this study may be viewed. The language, thought, culture relationships which define the context and scope of this study is considered first.

Language, Thought, and Culture

The basic premise of this study is that writing processes, and in particular the writing processes of adult bilingual/

bicultural individuals, are essentially processes involving the relationships among language, thought, and culture. Even though the relationships among language, thought, and culture may appear imprecise (language overlaps with culture insofar as language is the carrier of culture and the line between language and thought disappears when language is contrasted with thought), this impreciseness did not stop scholars from searching for and producing an ever increasing number of studies about the relationships. Nineteenth century anthropologists such as Tylor (1871) and Levy-Bruhl (1910) suggested that primitive people could not think logically and therefore could not communicate logically. The reverse of the process-- that primitive people thought as primitives because they had a primitive language--was advanced, in the twentieth century, by Sapir and Whorf. In fact Sapir and Whorf in their theory, known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, stated that the structure of language "powerfully conditions our thinking" (Sapir 1949:162) and that "we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages" (Whorf 1956:213).

Vygotsky asked whether language preceded thought or thought preceded language. He suggested that thought and language have separate roots but eventually meet (at about age two) "and join to initiate a new form of behavior (1962:43). Piaget (1930) proposed, that in the child's cognitive development, language followed thought and did not direct it. Language, as viewed by Piaget, was neither a tool of thought in Vygotsky's sense nor an interpreter of perception as

proposed by Sapir and Whorf. Rather, language, Piaget claimed, was just one of many symbolic systems available to the child.

The relationship between language and culture is evident in such anthropological studies as those conducted by Whorf (1956) in the Mexican and Mayan cultures; Cole et al. (1971) in the Kpelle tribe of Central Liberia; and Lee (1979) in the Trobriand Islands (off New Guinea). These researchers seemed to agree that the manner in which human beings have been culturally conditioned to think is reflected in their use of language. Among linguists, Lado suggested that meanings are not the same in all languages because the meaning by which societies classify their experience are "culturally determined and modified" (1957:113), and Kaplan (1972) proposed that logic, or the sequence of thought, is a cultural phenomenon and that each culture offers to its speakers a ready-made set of thought patterns which tends to impose itself every time the individual attempts to communicate. Bernstein (1975), a sociologist, maintained that meaning is embedded in a social system and that different social systems can generate quite different codes. These codes, "elaborated" and "restricted," will then be used to elicit and strengthen the ways of thinking and feeling pertaining to that group.

Various researchers suggested that bilinguals respond differently to linguistic stimuli depending on the language being used. For example, Ervin (1968) found that English-Japanese bilinguals used different concepts in each language when reacting to the same stimulus in a free association

task; and Marcos and Trujillo (1981) found, in the content analysis of psychiatric interviews of Spanish-speaking bicultural patients, that their "patients gave different responses to the same question in English and Spanish" and "most often the English responses suggested greater psychopathology" (1981:191).

The literature briefly examined above appears to make clear two things: First, there are close relationships among language, thought, and culture. Second, an understanding of the interaction of language, thought, and culture is crucial to an understanding of the linguistic behavior of bilingual/bicultural individuals.

Bilingualism

The acquisition of L1 normally takes place during infancy and early childhood, at a time which Lenneberg termed the "critical period" (1967:176). Chomsky (1965) went further and posited an innate theory of language acquisition. The notions of innateness and critical period strongly suggest that the processes of L1 acquisition are intimately tied to stages of physiological development, and if language is not acquired during this period, it may be achieved only partially and obviously with a great deal more difficulty during later stages of growth. In addition, there is the factor of environment to be considered in discussing L1 acquisition. Children are highly dependent on social models for learning, and this dependence results in identification with the people who satisfy their needs (Parsons 1961).

Native language acquisition is, then, not only a matter of acquiring a system of symbols, but also a matter of acquiring a system of values, beliefs, and attitudes.

The literature on dual-language acquisition does not contain a really comprehensive theory about the processes underlying bilingual development. Some of the early researchers argued that bilinguals are likely to be continually caught in a competition between L1 and L2. Leopold (1949), for example, suggested that bilinguals cannot maintain complete independence; one language, usually, interferes with the production of the other. Weinreich (1953) reported similar findings. He also proposed that there are basically two types of bilinguals, those who learned both languages in a common context, the compound or fluent speaker type, and those who learned their two languages in different contexts, the coordinate or less fluent speaker type. Lambert, Havelka, and Gardner (1972) introduced the concepts balanced (fully competent in both languages) and dominant (greater competency in one of the two languages) bilinguals. More recently Cummins proposed that "basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS)" and "cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP)" (1980:28) in the native language are a prerequisite to proficiency in a second language. Finally, some investigators emphasized the neurolinguistic aspects of bilingualism. Albert and Obler (1978), for example, maintained that the bilingual brain functions differently from that of the monolingual, and that the right hemisphere plays a major role

in the learning of a second language.

Biculturalism

The two most popular theories for the understanding of biculturalism are an extension of the "marginal man" theory originally proposed by Park and the "mask" theory postulated by Crowley. Park (1928) formulated his concept of marginal man in referring to migrant Jews who were forced to live in ghettos and who had to acquire the social ways of the host community but who, at the same time, tenaciously "preserved their own tribal traditions and their culture" (1928:891). Crowley (1957) investigated the possible outcome of different cultural contacts in the island of Trinidad and found that Trinidadians learned enough of the other culture to pass when necessary as a member of that particular culture. This learning, Crowley maintained, is a "veneer" or "mask" (1957:823) that is put on when involved in encounters in the other culture and is not an integral part of the individual's psyche. Polgar (1960), on the basis of data from a group of North American Indian teenagers, observed that there is simply no adequate theory for comprehending the bicultural. He avoided the use of the term bicultural and introduced rather the concept of "biculturation" which he defined as a "socialization" of individuals "into two or more cultures" (1960:217).

One thing seems clear, though. No individuals exposed to a certain pattern of culture for long periods of time can survive within their environment without accommodating some new cultural traits.

Research on Writing Processes

A key idea in approaching the study of writing is that of rhetoric. In fact, nearly all researchers who have focused on writing have employed rhetoric as their conceptual framework. A word about rhetorics, then, is in order at this point.

Rhetoricians from Aristotle to Oliver have defined rhetoric in terms of language or thought. Brooks, for example, defined rhetoric as "the art of using language effectively" (1972: 5), and Oliver as "a mode of thinking" (1965: x-xi). Still others such as Kinneavy (1971), Britton (1970), and Moffet (1968) attempted to create a total framework for the field of rhetoric by uniting traditional definitions (language based) with contemporary ones (based on thinking). The understanding that rhetorical patterns differ from one culture to another has been postulated, among others, by Chase (1967), Hall (1959), and Kaplan (1972). These writers implicitly or explicitly suggested that rhetorical traditions are the result of cultural conditioning.

The major portion of the literature on composing processes has been based on empirical observations of the act of composing while another portion has been focused principally on theoretical formulations (see Pettigrew 1981 and Humes 1983 for a review of the available literature).

From the empirical studies available, only those major investigations which were directly related to this study are cited here. Emig (1971), the first investigator who dealt directly with the composing process, found that composing

is a multi-faceted, complex process. She also found that the high school students in her study engaged in two modes of composing: reflexive (focused upon the writer's thoughts, feelings, and experiences) and extensive (focused upon the written message). Pianko (1979) found that, as a whole, college freshmen students wrote in the "extensive" mode and that the "remedial" writers showed an "over-concern for the mechanics and usage and correct wording during composing" (1979:13). Perl (1979), after observing the composing processes of five "unskilled " college students, found that these students were concerned primarily with the surface features of the writing task, and that "premature and rigid attempts to correct and edit their work truncate the flow of composing" (1979:328).

From the theoretical observations available, those of Flower and Hayes, Shanklin, and Daiute bear most closely on this study. Flower and Hayes proposed the "switchboard operator" model of composing. According to this model a writer juggles "a number of simultaneous constraints" (1981:31) such as meanings, syntax, grammar, etc. Shanklin (1981) postulated that writing should be viewed as a process of "transactions" whereby the writer interacts with his/her product. Daiute provided a psycholinguistic model of writing. According to her, composing involves "forming ideas into linguistic sequences" and is "influenced by cognitive factors" (1981:9).

Studies of Bilinguals' Writing

Investigators concerned with bilingual/bicultural students' writing focused mainly on the written product and worked principally with elementary and secondary school students (Ng 1966, Chang 1971, Rodrigues 1974). The writing behaviors of adult Spanish-speaking bilingual students were investigated by Santiago, Chelala, and De Jesus. Santiago (1970) sought to examine the writing abilities of bilingual college students in English and Spanish in an effort to determine whether the subjects used different patterns of logical relations in Spanish and English which might lead to rhetorical interference. He found that, in general, these bilingual sudents wrote in similar fashion in both languages. Chelala (1981) explored the composing process, in English and Spanish, of two Spanish-speaking professional women. She reported, among other things, that these students, when writing in English, used their native language as a source, did not write second drafts of their texts, and had difficulties writing transactional texts. De Jesus (1982) investigated the relationship that existed between the Spanish and English writing proficiency of college freshmen in Puerto Rico. Analysis of the data indicated that writing proficiency in Spanish is related to writing proficiency in English.

Methodology

The methodology which offered the most promising research strategies for this study came from ethnography. Ethnography is a methodology of cultural anthropology and as such is

designed to describe human behavior "from the native point of view" (Spradley 1979:3) in terms of cultural dimensions, as manifested in people's verbal and nonverbal behavior. (See Malinowski 1935, Spradley 1979, 1980, and Goetz and Lecompte 1984 for a comprehensive discussion of this topic). Two ethnographic strategies that deal with describing and interpreting thoughts and behaviors, from the perspective of both observed and observer, are the emic and etic approaches. (See Pike 1967 and Harris 1979 for a fuller account of these two concepts.)

The ethnographic presentation of this study is primarily emic rather than etic. That is, the researcher emphasized the importance of the informant's cognitive and ideational categories, presented in the form of verbatim texts, rather than in the activity of writing; much of the analysis of the texts was based on the informant's concepts rather than that of the researcher; and the data-gathering techniques were principally based on in-depth interviews.

The ethnographic study of the writing processes of bilingual/bicultural individuals has methodological advantages. Because bilingualism/biculturalism is a small unit of a complex cultural-linguistic system, the bilingual/bicultural person is a "natural" unit of ethnographic study. Furthermore, the creation of a single sentence, phrase, or paragraph may be regarded as an attempt to communicate a certain cultural meaning in the same sense that the creation of an essay, an episode, and a book may be regarded as transmitting a

whole world outlook. (For a critique of ethnography, see McCall and Simons 1969.)

Overview of the Study

The participants of this study were ten (six females and four males) Latin American bilingual/bicultural[1] graduate students who were completing, at the time of the study, their doctoral studies, in bilingual education, at various universities in New York and New Jersey. All of these students had completed their initial schooling (K-12) in their home countries. The average age of the ten students was 35 years, their mean length of residence in the United States was 19.7 years, and the average reported number of years of study in U.S. colleges or universities was 8.8. In order to collect the data, the researcher interviewed and observed writers in naturalistic environments. In addition each writer was directed to compose ("aloud" in two instances) three different essays: about a personal experience, a topic preselected by the researcher, and about an article previously read. These assays correspond approximately and respectively

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[1]Degree of bilingualism and biculturalism was determined by the "Self-Report (English/Spanish) Bilingual Schedule" and the "Inventory of Bicultural Sensitivity" constructed by the researcher. Content validity for both instruments was determined by three anthropologists and two bilingual educators. Based upon the test-retest procedure, reliability of 0.96 (bilingualism) and 0.93 (biculturalism) were yielded.

to the three different intellectual functions: memory, reasoning, and comprehension.

From the ten students, two, Miguel and Nora, were chosen for more intensive interviews and observation. These two students were chosen because they represent opposite ends of the spectrum in writing skills commonly found among bilingual graduate students: one with devotion to scholarship who writes in English for enjoyment, and the other who writes "mostly to fulfill requirements." The interviews and observation of these two students took place primarily at the students' work places and lasted for seven months in one case, and nine months in the other.

Analysis of Findings

In this section the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the three questions posed at the beginning of the study. (The three subtopics that follow answer questions 1, 2, and 3 respectively). The findings are examined, explained, and interpreted within the framework of the particular concepts discussed in the section "Background of the Study," the researcher's perspective, and in terms of the subjective categories expressed by the participants--the "native's" frame of reference.

Interaction Among Native and Acquired Language, Thought, and Culture

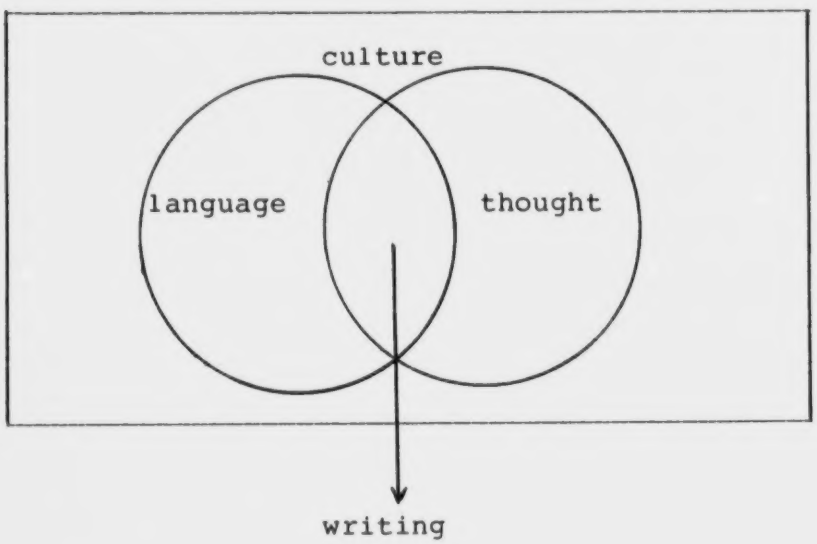
As argued at the beginning of this study, an investigation of the writing processes of bilingual/bicultural graduate

students requires an understanding of the interaction among language, thought, and culture (LTC). Such an understanding can be facilitated by a graphic model (Fig. 1).

The model clearly indicates that language, thought, and culture must be taken into account to fully assess the conditions generating (and influencing) writing. It is also clear that the model indicates a cultural dominance (in this study culture is seen as a system of knowledge [see Goodenough 1967]) over language and thought. It can be said, therefore, that there is a predictable relationship between writing and the three elements, language, thought, and culture: competence in writing occurs only as a consequence of competence in LTC, and "odd" writing will result if such competence in either one or more of the three components is not mastered.

This model is not intended to be a strong claim about LTC structures and their relations (which are far more complex). The major goal is to provide a general functional relationship among language, thought, and culture, which would allow one to seek and order information about how individuals with two LTCs write. The following excerpt appears to be a good illustration. It deals with the topic "Significance of Environment in the Shaping of Intelligence" written (in the technical mode) by Nora whose composing seemed to exemplify bilinguality and biculturality. Her comments included in brackets are not part of the written text. The text is presented in its original form.

Figure 1. Conditions Affecting Writing



The environment has great influence en in the intelligence of people. [Studies have been prooved... no...cases have been prooved...no that's not the word I am looking for.... It has, yes] It has been proven that a child with an average intelligence if placed in a home of intellectuals, his IQ will aument. On the other children with above average IQ if placed in in environment that is not...[what is that word...uhm...algo que conduce...oh yes] condusive to intellect, his intelligence would will be hinder.

Granted, intelligence is genetic, but it if is ...[grown...no that's not it. What's that word...si] cultivated by the environment it can reach its greatest potential. It has been proved that [children that have...no that had...let's see, que tuvieron...had have] children that had have a high IQ if placed in a criminal environment become criminals. [Very smart criminals, ha, ha, ha but still criminals.] Very smart criminals but still delinquentes...[You can say delinquents, can you? In my country we call those kids who drop out of the schools delinquents. ... They seldom...no they rarely.... Oh I can't think of this word... persiguen...pursue...ok.] They rarely pursue a professional career.

Another prove that environment has influence is by school districts. If a child with an average

28 intelligence is placed in a school district where
29 education excelencia excellence in education is
30 emphasized, that child with the help of [the parents]
31 the home [will reach...un nivel academico...ok]
32 will reach an academic level which could never
33 have been reach in a different environment.

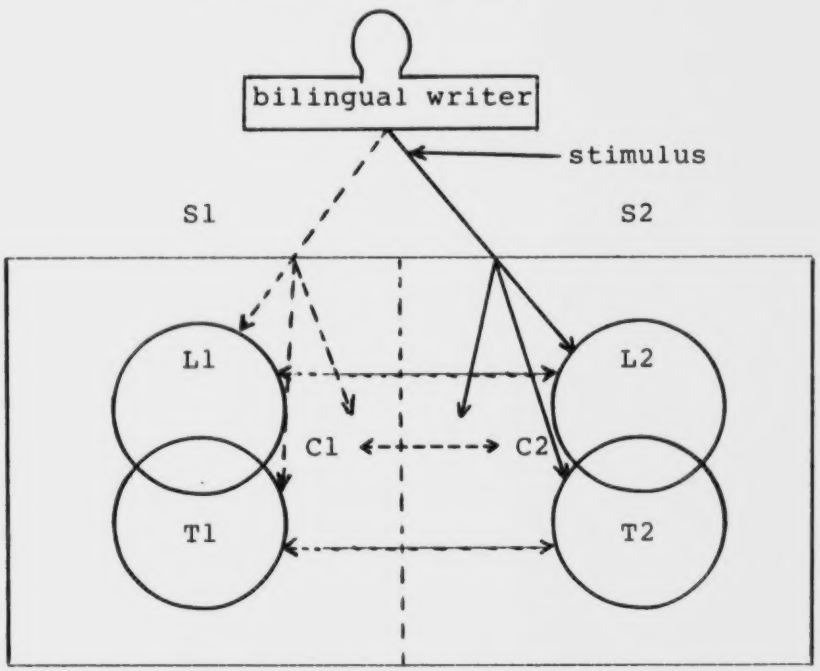
An examination of the excerpt above reveals some interesting features. It is apparent that Nora has been using her native and acquired LTCs almost interchangeably. There is a constant interaction, a sort of back and forth movement, between her two systems. (Indeed, one could talk of this kind of writing as "writing with two LTC systems.") She seems to interpret the "world out there" through both her native and acquired LTC systems.

From the foregoing, it appears possible, then, to discuss the writing processes of bilingual/bicultural graduate students empirically and to develop a workable model. Fig. 2 is intended to fulfill this purpose.

In its schematic form, the model is simplistic. For example, it does not take into account the various components of language such as its grapheme-phoneme and semantic representations; of thought such as attention, perception, memory, etc.; and of culture such as its ideational and affective dimensions. But the representation does highlight the major characteristics of the elements involved in the writing of bilingual/bicultural persons.

The model consists of two interacting (and mutually

Figure 2. Writing Processes of Bilingual/ Bicultural Students



influencing) systems: system 1 (S1) and system 2 (S2). Each system, with its corresponding L1 T1 C1 and L2 T2 C2, represents culture-specific "structures" (or psychocultural dimensions).

According to this model, the writing process, say in L2, consists of a stimulus event from within or without the writer that activates simultaneously the three elements L2 T2 C2. The solid lines link stimuli to S2. This representation is used to indicate that at the time a decision is made to write, the writer has pretty much in mind which system to use. Using some metaphors, the "gates" and "paths" to and from S2 (or S1 if the writer decided to write using the S1 system) are open and ready for use. The broken lines linking the three elements of S1 and S2 are meant to suggest that there is a direct relation between the elements of S1 and S2 and that at any given moment, whether automatically or controlled, any one (or all) of the lines may become solid indicating a direct influence of L1 T1 C1 on L2 T2 C2 (or vice-versa). The influence is not necessarily that of, say L1 on L2, but of L1 on T2 or C2. Thus, it is possible that S1 monitors what occurs at S2 (or vice-versa) as Nora's excerpt demonstrates. For example, the back and forth movement Nora makes between her native (L1) and acquired (L2) languages is clearly seen in lines 1, 9, 16, 24, and 31. In line 1 she writes the Spanish <u>en</u> and its English equivalent "in"; in lines 9, 16, 24, 31, she switches from English to Spanish in order to find the appropriate English expression. In fact, this type of interaction may be conceptualized in

terms of metalinguistic awareness (or monitor model as Krashen 1980 would have it.)

Interactions between T1 and T2 appear to come into play when bilinguals attempt to find categories for L2 which were embedded in C1, and when corrections are made by the "bicognitive" student in the distortions and intrusions in logic and coherence caused by T2 (or T1). To make a text "logical" and coherent many bilinguals switch back and forth between T1 and T2. For example, Nora demonstrates in lines 9-10, 13-14, 20-24, and 30-31, an analysis of her text in terms of rational processes. The example is instructive both because it seems to require the inference of rationality and higher thought processes (deciding about appropriate expressions) and because it demonstrates the use of two cognitive systems reflected in the bicognitive's use of L1 and L2. T1-T2 interaction may be conceptualized as meta-cognitive awareness

C1 C2 interaction is directly observed in lines 20 through 22. The concept "delinquent" clearly has different cultural meanings and suggests that delincuente (the Spanish equivalent) is a culturally sensitive concept linked to a particular image in the external world. Notice that she compares the C1 meaning of delinquent with the meaning implied in C2. Her native (C1) and acquired (C2) perceptions of delinquent are in this case syncretic; both are seen as negative conceptual items. However, she chooses the meaning of delinquent experienced in her native culture (equivalent

to criminal). In other words, she demonstrates the capacity to make more refined differentiation between two similar categories of two cultural worlds. Her hesitation clearly reflects a merger between her U.S.-Anglo conceptualization of delinquent and her past native experience. Simply put, although Nora appears to use both cultures as frames of reference, she decides on the one that, in this particular context, carries the "right meaning" to her. C1-C2 interaction may be conceptualized as metacultural awareness

An excerpt from Miguel's interview illustrates how this student perceived the interaction among L2-T2-C2 and L1-T1-C1:

Q: As you write in English are your thoughts in English or in Spanish?

A: In English, if you mean by thought the type of symbolic manipulation that immediately precedes the act of writing. And in Spanish if I write in Spanish. However, I occasionally switch thoughts from English to Spanish and vice-versa. This happens when I get stuck with a conceptual item, a word, and sometimes a grammatical structure. In more simple terms, I switch to Spanish to "fix" my English [laughs], that is, to make pretty sure that my English expression is correct. Spanish is my "spare" language when I write in English. And sometimes it's the other way around; I use English as a spare language when writing in Spanish.

The interaction among L2-T2-C2 and L1-T1-C1 is also

clearly observed when one reads literary works produced (in L2) by bilingual/bicultural individuals. Since the Latin American adult bilingual/bicultural writers have had, in most cases, a literacy and literary traditions developed within a Latin American culture, they will often produce a literature which is "typically" Latin American. That is, the content, the meaning, the setting, the characterization, and the style of the text will frequently reflect the thought, the sociocultural world, and the literary traditions of Latin American people.

The foregoing analysis and discussion show how LTC factors interact and how S1 appears to influence the writing of bilinguals in L2 (more precisely in S2). The analysis is congruent with the theories on language-thought relationships proposed by Sapir (1949), Whorf (1956), Vygotsky (1962), and Piaget (1930). These social scientists, it may be recalled, claimed that a close relationship exists between language and thought. The analysis is also compatible with the theories on language-culture relationships proposed by Lado (1957), Kaplan (1972), and Bernstein (1975) who suggested that cultural knowledge is embedded and transmitted in and by language.

To summarize, and to answer question one more directly, the native cultural and linguistic background (L1 T1 C1) of the bilingual/bicultural graduate students appeared to affect their writing processes in English (L2). This state of interactiveness appears to be a permanent feature of bilingual/bicultural persons as one of the students implicitly

indicated:

> Whenever I write in English there is this thing that haunts me from deep within. The feeling is somewhat similar to that of a person who because some reason must learn how to write with his left hand. Eventually the person learns how to write with the left hand, but every time he sits and begins to write, although he writes with the left, the right hand appears to be doing some of the movements.

Halting, Recursive, and
Doubt-Riddled Writing

From the foregoing discussion, it is reasonably clear that writing by Spanish-Speaking bilingual/ bicultural students requires "adjustments" to the ways of L2 T2 C2 and L1 T1 C1. These "adjustments" resulted in the bilingual writers developing certain traits in the way they wrote that might be characterized as halting, recursive, and doubt- riddled. These three behaviors are intimately related; that is, the students came to a halt because they had to search for a word, had to revise and correct a misconstructed expression, or simply because they were "doubtful about the whole thing." In the following excerpt Miguel explains the reasons why he constantly stopped his writing:

Q: How would you describe your writing characteristics in English?

A: Overall I would say that my writing in English

is slow, painful, and frequently riddled with doubts. I must constantly stop to make sure that my syntax, my grammar, my spelling--especially my spelling--are correct. Also the...unavailability of the right word to express a certain idea makes me stop frequently. For example, just a short while ago I was writing a letter to the principal of my school--a so called referral letter for a student's special placement--and before I could finish it I consulted the dictionary about three times (just to make sure), checked the right use of a verb (might), and revised the letter at least three times. In all, it took me about one hour to complete the letter. The same letter in Spanish would have taken me from five to ten minutes.

The reason is that while I write something in Spanish I don't think about whether the logic, the construction, the grammar, or the spelling of words are correct. These are things that occur automatically, spontaneously, almost unconsciously.

A similar view was expressed by Nora:

Well...I could say that there are different reasons why I stop writing. Sometimes I stop writing because I don't have the word I need. Sometimes I stop to see whether my sentences are correct, to check my grammar, or to make sure that I have spelled a word correctly or simply because I am very doubtful about the whole thing. Actually, I am almost never sure about the

correctness of my sentences. Other times I stop when something doesn't sound right, to see if the paragraphs are consistent...you know. Sometimes to make sure I am keeping in line with the major ideas... uh...I think those are the main reasons.

Halting in reality, comprises the other two behaviors; therefore, in what follows, halting is discussed as a central idea.

The halting character of the bilingual's writing appears to occur at two levels: (1) lexical and (2) grammatical Haltingness among the ten students was particularly evident at the lexical level, but could also be seen at the grammatical level.

At the lexical level the bilingual/bicultural students may come to a halt because they don't have the right (English) word to express a certain idea. The inability to find "the word" may be due to different causes. The salient cause, however, expressed by the bilinguals themselves is that they often do not have the word at their immediate disposal.

Many bilingual/biculturals, even though they are proficient speakers, have not yet fully internalized many of the semantic nuances (connotations, denotations, synonyms, antonyms) of the English language. That is, their use of these nuances is not as efficient or automatic as that of the native speaker. They must frequently make great efforts to generate "the right words" in order to produce a well constructed sentence, paragraph, and essay. The task becomes even more "painful" when the bilingual attempts to write a paper for a "critical

audience" such as university faculty.

Because bilinguals must continuously struggle with the production and manipulation of lexical items, they have developed certain adaptive strategies in order to solve many lexical impasses. Some bilingual writers may choose particular L1 semantic structures to relate and organize their ideas in L2. This occurs most frequently when the bilingual uses cognate words as direct equivalents. For example, Nora in writing about IQ used words such as "aument [sic]"= aumento (line 7), "conducive"= condusivo (line 10), "cultivate"=cultivar (line 14), "exellence[sic]"= excelencia (line 29) to express concepts in L2 whose meaning, however, appears to have been initially coded in L1. Other bilinguals translate one language into another in order to successfully produce well-written texts. Still other students will utilize a combination of strategies tailored to their peculiar needs. For example, Miguel recruited the help of a native speaker to have his texts "proofread" and had in front of his desk a list of approximately 300 words commonly used in academic writing.

Halting at the grammatical level is most clearly perceived when the bilingual writers suddenly stops "because something doesn't sound right." They then investigate the reasons and frequently finds that their sentence(s) exhibits a grammatical inconsistency. Most bilinguals have not yet mastered certain grammatical rules of L2 to the point of full proficiency. Mastering the grammatical rules in this case means

not only knowing grammar but being able to apply it, to produce it, and to understand it, quickly and intuitively, in the way a native speaker does, in an endless number of grammatically correct sentences. When "something doesn't sound right," the bilingual often pauses and thinks about the construction, the grammar, the proper word, etc. "What is the use of knowing that the past of do is did and that of go is went when in writing or speaking, I sometimes would write or say, Did he went?" explained one student. Another student clarified this inconsistency by arguing: "When you write in the past you use the past, at least this is how I learned."

In order to solve grammatical impasses some bilingual writers will utter (to themselves) the linguistic structure they know best, L1, compare the structure of L1 with the L2 expression, and then attempt to construct a structure in L2 using the L1 structure as a model. Some bilinguals simply avoid troublesome or more complex grammatical constructions because they are likely to sound "illiterate" or "foreign" in favor of simpler and safer constructions.

In short, the processes of distinguishing, making exceptions, generalizing, or contrasting lexical and grammatical patterns are not easily available to the bilingual writer. Accordingly, a large part of the bilinguals' composing processes becomes a deliberate and conscious effort--i.e., shuttling back and forth between S1 and S2, searching for the right word, constructing the right grammatical expression, etc.--

rather than a spontaneous and creative activity. That is, the bilinguals assign primary importance to the mechanical aspects of writing (or "putting things right" as one student put it) rather than on the primacy of imagination and invention. The ability to be creative in L2 derives, from all the linguistic models native learners have absorbed, during childhood and school years, creating sets of schemas or linguistic chunks that are ready and available to be combined in all sorts of ways. Undoubtedly, the well-read native writers (in prose particularly) have absorbed all the prose models and sets of structural paradigms of their native language and can intuitively reproduce them. Many of the bilingual students, however, do not have this intuitive base and lack of it appears to reduce their creative ability in L2.

Similar findings were reported by Perl (1979) and Pianko (1979). These investigators, observed that certain monolingual writers ("unskilled" "beginning") spend a great deal of time on the surface level of the writing process rather than on creating effective and purposeful content. The question then arises: What is the difference between the adult bilinguals' concerns for the local aspects of writing and those similar concerns expressed by monolinguals? The conceptual distinctions between "automatic" and "controlled" language processing suggested by McLaughlin (1979), between "acquiring" and "learning" a language proposed by Krashen (1980), and between "competence" and "performance" advocated by Chomsky (1965) appear to signal the possible direction

the answer might take. Such a possible direction is suggested by the following metaphor, intended here merely as a heuristic:- monolingual:bilingual::automatic:controlled::acquiring:learning::competence:performance. It is possible, then, that the adult bilinguals' excessive concern with the form of writing, in L2, is rooted in their constant preoccupation with "controlling" the production of L2, in their conscious efforts to "learn" the linguistic patterns and rules of L2, and certainly in their minimum level of language "competence" in L2. What is at the root of "unskilled" monolinguals' preoccupation with the surface features of writing? There is at present no clear answer to this question. The salient notion, however, is that language "proficiency" plays a major role in such concerns.

In terms of research on non-native writing, the position suggested here confirms in part those of Zamel, whose least skilled writers "paused so often and between such short chunks" (1983:173) and Chelala (1981) whose two adult Spanish-speaking bilingual subjects shuttled, as they wrote, between L1 and L2.

The concerns with lexical and grammatical items are best seen in the act of handling a full text. Writers frequently convey their texts in different modes; the modes employed depend, almost invariably, on the type of audience to whom the intended text (or communication) is addressed.

Modes of Writing

Writing, as conceptualized previously, is a multi-level

process involving ordering thoughts in logical sequence, manipulating linguistic items, expressing cultural categories, and an overall combining of all these elements into a single meaningful text. How a given written communication develops can then be seen as a function of how the communicators respond to each other's linguistic, cognitive, and cultural idiosyncrasies. All written communication in this sense can, therefore, be viewed as an interplay between the writer's LTC and the reader's LTC. Confusion in written communication, especially cross-cultural written communication, can often be traced to failures in interpreting LTC. Correct interpretation of LTC is naturally easier to individuals who possess the same LTC background.

Following the foregoing line of argument, and in response to question three of the study, it can be said that writing modes among bilinguals usually develop along the three conceptual categories--language, thought, and culture: (1) <u>expressive</u> (emphasis on cultural items); (2) <u>instrumental</u> (emphasis on the pragmatic use of language); and (3) <u>technical</u> (emphasis on cognitive operations). Although not always aware of the modes in which they were writing, the bilingual students in this study were quite aware of the types of audience for whom they were writing. In the following excerpt Miguel explained the types of writing he did.

> Basically, most of the writing I do is for university professors, for an academic audience. This type of writing is somewhat technical, specialized, and involves

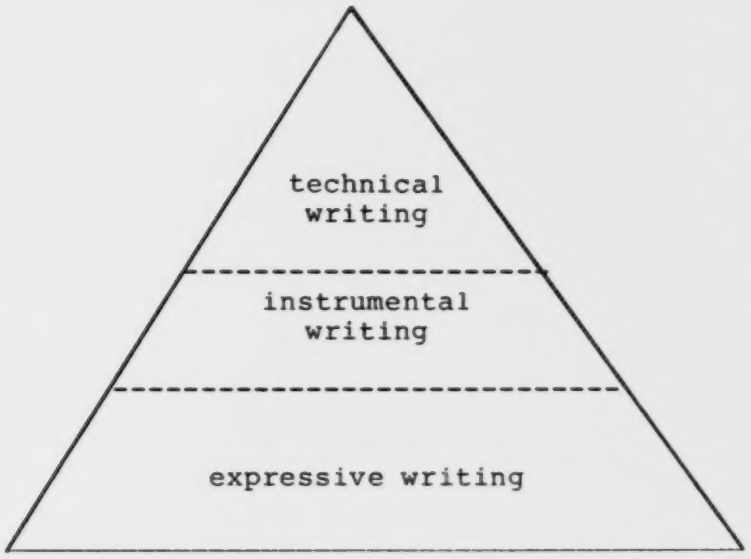
a special kind of jargon, "academese" if you will. It's the type of writing with which I struggle the most. Another type is one I would term social writing. This type essentially includes letters to parents of students, letters to institutions, correspondence with my mentors, and any type of writing addressed to a formal audience. This type of writing is social in nature. The third type of writing I do is the one I use in my short stories, plays, and poems. This type of writing is literary in character, and the main purpose of it is to give expression to my emotional and intellectual sensitivities in an aesthetic form. It is funny, because I use only English when I write plays, and only Spanish when I write poems. I find it almost impossible to write plays in Spanish and poems in English.

Along the same lines, Nora expressed:

My writings have to be classified as two types: one is personal writing and the other is impersonal writing. The personal writing is most of the times in Spanish for my relatives and close friends. The impersonal writing is for my job, the university. That is more or less the types of writing I do. When I write for the university I am not creative; I tend to paraphrase.

The writing mode the bilingual students choose to use appears to be a function of the kind of relationship that exists between the bilinguals and their readers. The modes

Figure 3. Writing Modes



differ from one another, then, with respect to the type of reader to whom the written texts are addressed and the meanings they tend to convey, whether personal, social, or technical. These modes can be represented graphically by figure 3. The drawing implies a gradient dimension: instrumental writing is built upon the expressive level, and technical writing is built upon the expressive and the instrumental. The dotted lines are meant to signify that the boundaries between one level and the next are not distinct and clear, and that one can find expressive elements within the istrumental (or technical) levels and vice-versa. There is always a parataxic (contaminating) element present in any written communication, and this element becomes greater as individuals must deal with two or more cultural and linguistic systems.

Expressive text is likely to be shaped by what the writer really thought or felt internally. In this type of writing bilinguals often come to define themselves with a relative degree of consistency as members of a particular cultural group. Expressive writing is, thus, more susceptible to the influence of the writer's cultural background. Other things being equal, communication (written/oral) at the expressive level will, therefore, contain truthful and sincere statements. The closer the relationship the more expressive the written communication becomes between the bilinguals and their readers. From this perspective expressive texts are better understood by those closer to the writer such as relatives, closer friends, and members of the bilingual's

(native) cultural group (the inner circle, so to speak).

Instrumental writing emphasizes the pragmatic use of language and focuses on the social and occupational world of the writer. The sources and objects for this level of writing include the usual array of formal interpersonal relations, institutions, traditions, and values that are commonly associated with the social realm. Its effectiveness and meaningfulness depends on the bilinguals' internalization and understanding of the social norms and institutions within which they live and work. It normally occurs in artificial settings such as place of work, office, etc., and it includes mainly business letters, letters to acquaintances, memos to colleagues, lesson plans, etc. The instrumental texts are better understood by the bilingual/biculturals' co-workers, acquaintances, and people with whom they maintain some form of social or business relationship, etc.

Technical writing stresses the cognitive operations of the writer and focuses on the bilingual's intellectual grasp of the external world. It usually conveys information of a technical nature. Its effectiveness and meaningfulness depend on the accuracy with which the bilingual presents facts about the external world. This type includes term papers, essays, reports, proposals, and theses. The main audience for this mode is university professors and people knowledgeable about the technical matters being communicated.

The three modes described above are compatible with Piaget's (1930) theory of intellectual development (from

egocentric--expressive, to other centered--instrumental and technical) and with the theories on rhetoric proposed by Britton (1970), Kinneavy (1971) and Moffett (1968)--focus on the writer, expressive; the audience, instrumental; and text, technical.

In sum, the majority of adult students who have acquired L2 T2 C2 late in their life appear to have difficulties manipulating S2 elements and consequently have difficulties attempting to communicate at each of the three levels. The foregoing propositions are consistent with the arguments on language advanced by Chomsky (1968), Lenneberg (1967), and Piaget (1955), all of whom emphasized the importance of early experience in the development of LTC, and who further argued, implicitly or explicitly, that the ability to acquire a language (L1 L2) after reaching a certain state of maturity appears to decrease substantially. Also, the analysis supports the findings reported by Kaplan (1965). Kaplan, quite probably the first researcher who attempted to investigate the writing behavior in L2 of non-native speakers, presented the view that non-native speakers could not write at the level comparable to native speakers because the non-native's cultural background produced a logic, and therefore a rhetoric, different from that of the native speaker. Obviously, the findings of this study do not by any means provide conclusive evidence of the impact of S1 upon the bilingual's communicative efforts in L2. But the researcher considers the question of such impact important

and challenging, especially if one is to understand the writing behaviors of adult bilingual/ bicultural students in terms of language, thought, and culture.

Implications

The implications of the findings of the present study seem obvious. Clearly any theory on writing behavior, particularly the composing processes of bilingual/bicultural students, is going to have to include a theory of language, thought, and culture. No such theory exists, and none is likely to be developed without the close participation of the disciplines involved in studying these three elements.

The implications for bilingual pedagogy appear less obvious. First, since the interrelationships among language, thought, and culture plays a crucial role in the writing processes of bilingual adult students, performance in writing (and academic success) is very much dependent on the student's mastering of the acquired language, thought, and culture (the essential ingredients of creativity). The instructional ("remedial") approach, in writing, must therefore ideally take into account these three factors.

Learning American philosophy or learning how to play baseball will hardly result in an "American way" of being or thinking. Thus, from a pedagogical perspective instructional programs for these students appear to be limited to one factor: language. Besides extensive daily writing (and reading) exercises, students should be provided with activities and experiences that allow them to acquire mastery of English

rhetorical organizations for writing term papers, proposals, theses, dissertations, and research papers. Toward this end bilingual students should be given "model" papers to be studied, analyzed, and, in some cases, imitated. They should pay special attention to the paper's rhetorical organization, frameworks, theses, and conclusions.

Samples of bilinguals' writings can most clearly exemplify how language, thought, and culture affect their writing. These samples may be used in training sessions to highlight more precisely and concisely the subtle "errors" (or "miscues") which occur during the writing process and of which bilingual students are generally unaware. The instructor's knowledge of the students' cultures and a high degree of sensitivity to their cultural backgrounds are particularly relevant in this context. This kind of cross-cultural awareness should actually be a sine-qua-non for everyone who deals regularly and on a professional basis with students from other cultures.

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